



Behind the Numbers

Montana hosted 9.4 million nonresident visitors in 2000 according to a preliminary report from the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) from the University of Montana. This number is even with 1999 figures.

"We are pleased that Montana's tourism industry held its own in 2000," said Travel Montana Director Matthew Cohn. "The wildfires had the potential to put a major hit on many of our Montana communities and businesses, but it seems that our tourism industry has weathered this storm. However," Cohn adds, "we have not forgotten that some of Montana's businesses were financially impacted by the fires and we will continue to market the state to visitors so they know Montana is a desirable travel destination."

The ITRR report states that out of the 9.4 million visitors, 49% of those nonresident travelers who came to Montana in 2000 were primarily here on vacation. Cohn notes that in 1993 ITRR figures show that Montana hosted 7.5 million visitors, with only 35% of those people on vacation. "This is a 43% increase in the number of people whose primary reason to come to the state was to vacation. We believe this increase points to the fact that our bed tax dollars and aggressive marketing efforts are persuading people to vacation here. These folks stay in our communities and spend money which benefits Montanans and

Montana's economy."

During 2000 nonresident visitors spent \$1.6 billion on lodging, food, shopping, transportation and gasoline, supporting 29,900 Montana jobs.

Legislative Update

If you're interested in tracking important tourism-related legislation, you should log onto Travel Montana's Intranet site at www.travelmontana.state.mt.us. "News from the Front," posts current bills and offers links to other useful legislative sites, and each Friday Matthew Cohn provides informational analysis on some of the most pressing legislation.

2001 Governor's Conference

Agenda Focuses on Economic Revival

Just as Montana's economic revival has been THE topic of public discussion in the New Year, the 2001 Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation has the world and Montana economies as headline presentations.

• On Monday, March 26, one of the nation's leading economic forecasters, Dr. Joel Prakken of Macroeconomic Advisors, will open the conference with a look at world economic trends and their impact on travel and tourism here and around the world.

• On Tuesday, March 27, a panel of Montanans involved in discussions on reviving Montana's economy will provide their perspectives of what's needed and what role tourism should or can play in this effort. The panel will include statewide and local economic development representatives, business start-up experts and economists.

The 2001 Governor's Conference takes place at Helena's Best Western Colonial Hotel, March 26-27, 2001. A registration brochure will be mailed in early February. A full agenda, registration form and other conference information is now available on the Governor's Conference website: travelmontana.state.mt.us/conference. To register, contact RMS Management Services, 406-443-1160, e-mail: skopec@rmsmanagement.com.

Pre-Governor's Conference Feature: Montana Cultural Tourism Workshop

On Sunday, March 25, Montana's Cultural Tourism partners are offering a half-day workshop featuring Becky Anderson, Executive Director of Handmade in America, a successful rural economic development program in North Carolina. Ms. Anderson is one of the nation's top experts on cultural tourism and community development. At the workshop, she will be joined by local, regional and state groups and organizations interested in looking at how the Handmade in America model can be successfully applied in Montana. The workshop will take place at Helena's Best Western Colonial Hotel from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Registration and costs of the workshop are separate from the Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation. For more workshop and exhibit information and registration details, contact Vicki Munson, 406-887-2126, e-mail: vmunson@cyberport.net.

Did You Know?

- The Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI) honored Travel Montana with two awards. Our website, visitmt.com, received a silver Golden Click Award for its "Forest Fire News" and "Go Beyond the Fires" web campaign, and our summer promotional TV commercial "Brain Probe" received the Bronze Adrian Advertising Award. Glacier Country won a Bronze Adrian Award for its 1999/2000 marketing campaign.
- Yellowstone Country is featured in the February issue of *Outdoor Life* magazine.
- Ice boating on Canyon Ferry Lake was the cover story for *Horizon Air* magazine's January issue.
- Butte was featured in the winter issue of *The World of Hibernia* magazine.
- Triple Creek Ranch has been named the "Hideout of the Year" by *Hideaway Report*.

Tourism Awards

Do you know of a Montanan or Montana community whose efforts promote or develop Montana's tourism industry? If you do, nominate them for the 2001 Montana Tourism Person or Community of the Year Awards.

For nomination forms or information contact Rachel Zeigler at Travel Montana, 406-444-2654, or download a nomination form from travelmontana.state.mt.us/conference. The deadline for nominations is March 2, 2001. Mail forms to Travel Montana, P.O. Box 200533, Helena, MT 59620-0533.

The Clicks Have It

A record 2.4 million visitors surfed Travel Montana's consumer websites in 2000. According to Electronic Marketing Manager Corrie Hahn, this number is almost double from last year. Hahn says the kid's site, montanakids.com, hosted 443,000 users in 2000 compared to 235,000 in 1999, and the Lewis and Clark site, lewisandclark.state.mt.us grew from 68,000 visits in 1999 to almost 90,000 in 2000. Hahn adds that web users spent an average of 12 minutes on our main page at visitmt.com.

Rounding Up the International Visitor

Sun Valley, Idaho, will host the RMI Round Up, March 21-23, 2001. Tour operators from Italy, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as three receptives from the United States will be at the meeting looking for year-round tourism products. Travel Montana's Overseas Marketing Manager, Pam Gosink, encourages Montana suppliers interested in the interna-

tional market, with a commissionable tourism product, to attend the event. This will be the only Round-Up for 2001. The next Round-Up is scheduled for March 2002 in Montana. For registration and information call Pam at 406-444-2654, e-mail: pam@visitmt.com, call RMI's Susan Maxwell at 307-637-4977, or log on to www.rmi-realamerica.com/intranet2/registration_form.pdf.

No Kidding—Another Great Web Promotion

Travel Montana is once again planning for the annual "Kid's Promotion" on montanakids.com. Entering its third year, this highly successful Internet campaign is aimed at children up to 18 years old to generate an awareness of Montana as a family vacation destination. This year's family will predominantly visit Gold West Country with some Yellowstone Country activities included as well. Travel Montana is looking for lodging properties and attractions to donate overnight stays and activities admission for the winning family's trip. Please contact Sarah Lawlor at Travel Montana, 406-444-1201 or sarah@visitmt.com, if you would be willing to help out with donations in exchange for Internet and press exposure.

Film Office News

The Montana Film Office is preparing for the Locations 2001 Global Expo at the Los Angeles Convention Center, February 23-24. This year the film office will show off the state's diverse locations from a brand-new trade show booth. The booth, constructed by Klaus Mackensen of the Montana Heritage Commission, is a replica of an Old West town.

Sten Iversen and Bill Kuney of the Montana Film Office will be staffing the Montana section of the town, with help from Connie Kenney of the Butte CVB and Karlee Smith of the Montana Heritage Commission.

First Impressions Count

Are you interested in leaving your visitors with a good first impression? If so, sign up for one of Travel Montana's SUPERHOST! workshops. These affordable customer service trainings offer front-line employees information on the importance of tourism to Montana's economy and their local communities. New to the workshop this year is a 20-minute video presentation on the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial that will help you communicate the Lewis and Clark story to your visitors. SUPERHOST! encourages interested participants to work with their chamber, economic development organization or job service committee to schedule a workshop. For more information on scheduling a program call Jeri May Rowley at 406-756-3674 or e-mail superhost@fvcc.cc.mt.us.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

Calendar of Events

February

- 5-6 TAC Bozeman
- 5-9 Italian journalist fam
- 12-19 BIT show, Milan, Italy
- 19-21 Corps of Rural Discovery Workshops
- 21-26 Ski Big Mountain Fam Tour - Whitefish CVB
- 23-24 Locations 2001 Global Expo, Los Angeles, CA

March

- 2 Deadline for Tourism Person and Community of the Year Awards

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to Travel Montana's Intranet site: travelmontana.state.mt.us.



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